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CIA's Whodunit

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CIA Chief William F. Raborn is fighting to stop what he considers a campaign by some of his own staff to discredit him. The admiral's concern is over high-level leaks of information critical of his administration. He has already exiled one top aide to the field and others may follow.—From Newsweek's Periscope.

Following is an undocumented version of an unrecorded exchange between Admiral Raborn and two top aides shortly after delivery of this week's edition of Newsweek.

Admiral Raborn: All right, this is it. I'm fed up.

First Deputy: What is it, sir?

Raborn: Don't act naive. You've seen this thing in Newsweek.

Second Deputy: What thing, sir? I never read magazines until after dinner. They disagree with me.

Raborn: Now, please, don't both of you pretend you don't know what I'm talking about. (*He throws the marked page across the desk*). Go ahead, read it and refresh your recollections.

First Deputy: (after reading) That certainly is a nasty item.

Second Deputy: Who could invent something like that?

Raborn: Let's not play games. You know we've had too many leaks around here. Now we have a leak about the leaks. And the way things are going, there'll be a leak about my raising hell about the leak about the leaks.

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First Deputy: We'll make certain that doesn't happen.

Raborn: How can you make certain?

Second Deputy: First, of course, we'll make an immediate check of all personnel to find out who reads Newsweek.

Raborn: That's just how another leak would start.

First Deputy: I agree. Moreover, from my own experience, I would deduce that the man who gave this out would be careful not to be seen reading Newsweek. He certainly wouldn't be a subscriber.

Second Deputy: I think you have something there. He would probably try to be seen reading Time.

First Deputy: Or The National Review.

Raborn: You're treating this whole thing superficially. Who would be most likely to leak a story about men who were dis-

ciplined for leaking stories to discredit me?

Second Deputy: Obviously, the men who were disciplined.

Raborn: That's too simple.

First Deputy: Or a relative.

Raborn: Absolutely not. It would have to be one of their enemies—someone who wanted us to suspect these very men. Gentlemen, I am shocked by your gullibility.

First Deputy: I think you must be right, Admiral. Silly of us.

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Raborn: (abruptly) Now, which one of you recommended that we take the disciplinary action?

Second Deputy: I don't recall precisely. I remember that you brought the matter up . . .

Raborn: Are you suggesting I leaked the story about demoting men who leaked stories to discredit me?

Second Deputy: Of course not.

First Deputy: We seem to be going around in a vicious circle.

Raborn: (grimly) Perhaps I am. Now let us start over. Articles appear in print clearly designed to injure my reputation. They cast doubt on my ability to run CIA. They are based on facts that came from within our own intelligence system.

Second Deputy: Well, half-truths, sir.

Raborn: Thank you. Let me continue. I was led to believe we had found the sources of the leak. We acted promptly and decisively, as I assured the President at the time.

First Deputy: Exactly.

Raborn: And soon thereafter we find that we can't even keep secret the fact that we've done something to preserve secrecy about what we've done to preserve secrecy.

Second Deputy: Those certainly are the facts.

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Raborn: Do you think all this helps to maintain public confidence in our secret operations?

First Deputy: It certainly doesn't. It's an insult to our intelligence, if I may say so. But this isn't the first time we've had trouble with Newsweek.

Raborn: Don't we have any friends there?

Second Deputy: Only one agent, but we're hesitant to communicate with him now.

Raborn: Why?

First Deputy: Well, frankly sir, we have reason to believe he's under surveillance by the FBI. He used to be one of our men overseas.

Raborn: Don't we have any privacy? What would J. Edgar Hoover do if this happened to him?

First Deputy: Probably fire someone.

Raborn: That's just what we did the first time. That's what started the latest trouble. All right, let's sweep it under the rug till I think it all through . . . Now, let's get to those reports from Hong Kong about what's happening in Red China.